

Community Partner for Brenda Visnovec: Lakeville

The Fire Chief of Lakeville, Mike Meyer, will be accepting the Public Fire Safety Education Award in the category of Community Partner Recognition for Brenda Visnovec from The City of Lakeville.

The Lakeville Fire Department was trying to budget for a fire extinguisher trainer and was denied. Brenda suggested holding silent auctions to sell promotional items and put the money into a special account. The Fire Department has two events each year where the silent auctions could be held, the Waffle Breakfast in July and the Fire Prevention Open House in October. Brenda graciously decided to volunteer her free time to organize and run the silent auctions at both events.

In 2011, the Lakeville Fire Department was able to purchase the fire extinguisher trainer which is used to train both fire fighters and the public. The diligence that Brenda and her staff put into this endeavor was amazing, most groups would have given up after two years of fund raising and they actually saw the project through to the final stage.

Award Information on Kevin Gravalin – Chaska Fire Department

This award winner has a passion in the fire prevention/fire code area that makes him stand out in this area. He was described as respected, dedicated, loyal and a team player. This educator cares about doing the right thing and providing valuable education to kids, the community and the firefighters. He is a leader in setting up the annual Fire Department Open House and annual fire and life safety education with the schools during fire prevention week. He is an advocate for safe structures, safe firefighters and safe communities.

The nomination noted several notable accomplishments and I will just highlight a few:

- Provides active fire prevention program for our private and public schools on an annual basis.
- Conducts inspections on a regular basis to community businesses, schools, healthcare facilities and other facilities. During these inspections the award winner is proactive to provide education and training with the contacts to improve fire safety in their facility.
- Developed and promotes a residential sprinkler program that offers low interest loans for the installation of residential fire sprinkler systems.
- Conducts regular education sessions for firefighters at business meetings and training drills on area businesses, fire prevention, or other life safety topics.
- Assisted in the development, coordination, and delivery of the Juvenile Fire setter's education in Carver County. This training is coordinated with law enforcement, family and health care establishments where appropriate.
- Completed multiple classes in community education, building construction, inspection, and investigation.

This award winner actively pursues individual growth through continued education and is always willing to personally assist in any way possible in the fire prevention area.

Award for John Linder - the Grand Rapids Fire Department

John Linder has been a member of the Grand Rapids Fire Department since 2004. In January of 2009 he was selected to manage the department's Fire Prevention and Education Program; a position which he actively pursued! In his role as Prevention and Education Officer, John provides fire prevention and home safety education in the community. He gives various presentations and demonstrations to the schools, day cares, seniors, and civic organizations in the area, schedules and maintains the Fire Safety House, and coordinates the Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program. He is proactive in seeking additional funding to help support the program, and has implemented some fun and creative ways for the department to deliver fire prevention and safety messages to the community. John's hard work and dedication to fire prevention and education has no doubt saved countless lives in the Grand Rapids community. Although large in stature and humble by nature, John is an impact player in the organization. As a past recipient of both the Grand Rapids Firefighter of the Year Award and the Chief's Meritorious Service Award, John exhibits the caring qualities that benefit the public and the leadership qualities that the fire service can be proud of.

Award for Kari Mechtel - Clear Lake Fire Department

Kari Mechtel has served on the Clear Lake Fire Department for 11 years. In that time, she established the first fire prevention open house for the Clear Lake fire Department. Over the past 10 years, she has taken the fire prevention budget from \$0- over \$2000. With hard work, dedication and support from the community and fire fighters, Kari has expanded the fire prevention program to not only the open house but to daycares and the school as well. Kari was presented with the 2009 Fire Fighter of the Year Award due to her continuous work with community events. The members of the Clear Lake Fire Department are honored to have Kari as a member.